



Editorial

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During 2011, the world witnessed new episodes that are highly relevant for all of us who deal with environmental issues and with the challenges of the sustainability of development. Early in the year, Japan experienced a tragedy caused by the coincidence between a natural disaster (tsunami) and human mistake. It rekindled the debate on the risks of the option for nuclear energy. In Brazil, a crude oil leak in deep waters brought back an uneasy issue, one that was raised by the grand oil leak of 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico – is Brazil really ready to deal with such a risk?

Also in 2011, the world followed another round of frustrated negotiations about measures to be taken by the international community regarding the long-term abatement of the problems created by climate change. The **17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, in December, in South Africa, was marked prominently by political frustrations and protests by environmentalists.

Although the COP17 meeting extended the Kyoto Protocol at least until 2017 and initiated a legally enforceable process that may lead to a new global climate agreement, to be instated in 2020, it did not bring about major innovations if the previous meeting is considered. The USA, one of the world's strongest polluters, did not support and did not include itself in the projected measures, particularly measures that may mitigate environmental impacts.

Other countries, like Canada, Russia and Japan, walked out of the Protocol, confirming that the short-term agenda, now under strong influence by the economic crisis that is unsettling the Northern Hemisphere, prevails over responsibility for the future. Once again it seems that Lord Keynes was right when he tried to explain why humans have so little commitment to future events – “in the long run, we will all be dead!”

The challenge of keeping the debate on sustainability alive is strong. 2012 will provide a new opportunity to this debate. Brazil will host still another grand international event, the **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**, known for short as Rio + 20. So far, it seems that there will be a strong mobilization, but there are signs that allow one to predict that no important decisions or agreements will occur. Our task is to call attention to relevant topics and provide scientific bases, in order to clarify uncertainties and support substantial decisions.

The Center for Sustainable Development, of the Universidade de Brasília (Brazil), in October of 2011, invited **Ignacy Sachs** to participate in a debate about the matters to be discussed and the

pathways to be followed by the Rio + 20 meeting. In this fourth issue of *Sustainability in Debate*, our **Debates** section contains his thoughts about some important manners by which the meeting may attain effective results

This issue also includes a dossier – entitled **Climate and Land Use Change** - about the important topic of climate changes and adaptations to them. Four articles address developments in India, Tunisia, the Amazon Region and São Paulo. The invited editor is Saulo Rodrigues Filho, currently director of the Center for Sustainable Development.

In honor of **Hassan Zaoual** (1950-2011), recently deceased, we requested an essay about his work, written by Jane Simoni. It is published in our section **Recommended Reading**. Zaoual, a founding member of our Editorial Board, will continue to inspire all those who are concerned with the pathways to sustainability

Our **Articles** section contains texts on environmental education and public policies; governance in hydroelectric ventures; and family farming and environmental policies in Brazil. Our **Reviews** section contains appraisals of recent books written by two strong names in the field of sustainability - **Joan Martinez-Alier** and **Peter Bartelmus**.

As we reach this fourth issue of *Sustainability in Debate*, we feel that we are close to attaining the **cruising speed** demanded by a young scientific journal.

We are receiving a constant flow of submissions, from Brazil and abroad. We have made headway in our potential public of Brazilian and foreign academicians, users of knowledge about sustainable development and sustainability policies in government, international agencies, in civil society, in NGOs and in the private sector. This public is confirmed by both readers' comments and by submitted manuscripts in which authors wish to publish their research results.

Our journal has been constantly accessed by non-Brazilian readers, confirming its potential for reaching its international potential.

Based on submissions, we can see that the texts sent to us have been produced by and are read by a large variety of academic researchers, enabling a dialogue between Southern and Northern hemispheres and exchanges among Brazil and many other countries in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. In the second half of 2011, our journal site was accessed by 4,700 visitors from 56 countries, speaking 37 languages. Readers have accessed our journal from the USA, New Zealand, France, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, India, Mexico, Canada and from almost all other countries in the American continent, besides a number of African nations. There were more than 15,000 accesses, a growth of 62 per cent over the previous period of a year and a half. 38 percent of our visitors returned at least one to the site.

Since our launching, 62 articles were submitted to *Sustainability in Debate* - 27 of them were published. Also published in our first four issues were two essays, 11 book reviews, five interviews, two debates, three research results, and two recommended readings.

The number of manuscripts reviewers grew considerably. All of them have doctoral degrees and are professionally recognized in their respective fields. Among the opening pages of this issue you will find a list of all reviewers who evaluated the texts published in issues 3 and 4.

Despite the increasing number of submissions, we have managed to get the manuscripts evaluated and to make editorial decisions in reasonably short time frames.

Also, the breadth of our indexation has expanded substantially. We are now indexed in Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), EBSCO Publishing, Latindex, Journal Storage (JSTOR), IBCT, WZB, Pluridoc, World-Cat, E-Resources, Services True Serials, and Ulrichs Web.

Recently, ***Sustainability in Debate*** was included in a DOAJ project, financed by a program called *European Commission's IST-PSP - European Libraries*, in which participate 19 of the major European research libraries. All periodicals indexed by DOAJ will be included in the *European Libraries* portal.

We remind our readers that ***Sustainability in Debate*** accepts submissions in the Portuguese, Spanish, French and English languages. The combination of two traits – the theme of sustainability and linguistic diversity – has attracted authors and readers from all over the world. After only four published issues, ***Sustainability in Debate*** is reaching Brazilian and non-Brazilian audiences and is on the path of consolidation.

We hope that our readers may find many texts of interest in our fourth issue.